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A D D R E S S

T O T H E

Christian Laity,

ESPECIALLY SUCH AS EMBRACING

UNITARIAN SENTIMENTS

C O N F O R M T O

TRINITARIAN WORSHIP,

T O W H I C H I S P R E F I X E D ,

An INTRODUCTION; wherein the WORSHIP of the
HOLY SCRIPTURES is contrasted with the
WORSHIP of the CHURCH of ENGLAND,

And of DISSENTERS.

L O N D O N :

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A D R E S S

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Introduction :
OR, THE
Worship of the Holy Scriptures
CONTRASTED WITH THE
Worship of the Church of
England,
AND OF
DISSENTERS.

SECTION I.

RULES and DIRECTIONS relative to the OBJECT of Worship or Prayer, collected from the NEW TESTAMENT.

MATT. iv. 10. *Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.* Luke iv. 8.

N. B. This is a quotation from the law of Moses, see Deut. vi. 13, and ch. x. 20. and it plainly asserts, that the LORD, the JEHOVAH of the Jews, is the *only Being* whom we must worship; and that He is *one Person*. This Being is uniformly spoken of through the Old Testament as *ONE, one Person*. Nothing can be more clear, express, and decisive on this point, than the terms used in Exod. xx. and Deut. v. *I am the LORD (Jehovah) thy God.* — *He who brought thee, &c.* *And God spake these words, saying, I am the LORD (Jehovah) thy God.* — *Thou shalt have no other Gods but Me, or besides Me, or before Me.* Wherever the

Personal

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**DIRECTIONS relative to the OBJECT of
Worship contained in the LITURGY of
the Church of England.**

“ **T**HE catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.”

Athanafian Creed.

“ Then likewise the Minister shall say, Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; Answer, As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.”

Morning Service.

And at the end of every Psalm throughout the year, and likewise in the end of Benedictus, Benedicite, Magnificat, & Nunc Dimitis shall be repeated,

Glory be to the Father, and to the, &c.
As it was in the beginning, is now, &c.

The same.

“ Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace by the con-

B 2 fession

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4 Directions, &c. in the New Testament.

Personal pronouns are applied to God they are used in the singular number only; to shew that God is one Mind, or one alone.

— vi. 6, 9. But thou, when thou prayest, pray to thy FATHER which is in secret, and thy FATHER, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. — After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our FATHER, which art in heaven, Luke xi. 2.

Luke xi. 13. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly FATHER give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?

John iv. 21, 23. Jesus saith unto the woman, Believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the FATHER.—But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshippers shall worship the FATHER in spirit and in truth; for the FATHER seeketh such to worship HIM,

John xiv. 13, 14. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the

FATHER
turn to 9. b.

Directions, &c. in the Liturgy. 5

fession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine Majesty to worship the Unity."

Collect for Trinity Sund.

" Above all things ye must give most humble and hearty thanks to *God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, for the Redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ.—To Him therefore with the Father and the Holy Ghost, let us give, (as we are most bounden) continual thanks."

Exhortation at the Communion.

" It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord almighty, and everlasting God, which art one God, one Lord, not one only Person, but three Persons, in one substance. For that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality."

Collect in the Communion for Trinity Sunday.

6 Directions, &c. in the New Testament.

FATHER may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

N. B. This is the first mention that our Lord makes of prayer being offered up to God in his name. And it is remarkable, that though he tells them that he will *do* those things for them, which they shall ask of the Father, yet he does not bid them to ask those things of *Him*, but of the *Father* in his name. Surely, if in any case he had intended to direct them to offer up prayer to Himself, it would have been in those cases, where he would be the person to *do those things* for them which they asked. — Is not this inference necessarily to be drawn from hence, That our Saviour intended to instruct his disciples, That Prayer was the *peculiar honour* due to the Father, the same as under the Old Testament, and as the light of reason directs? — An *Impartial Enquiry* what is the TEST of our Saviour's Miracles, &c. Printed for Noon, 1750, p. 56, 57.

— ch. xv.

turn to P. 8.

Directions, &c. in the Liturgy. 7

"Ye have prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive him, to release him of his sins, to sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, to give him the kingdom of heaven, and everlasting life."

Public Baptism for Infants.

8 *Directions, &c. in the New Testament.*

— ch. xv. 16. *I have chosen you, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the FATHER in my name, He may give it you.*

N. B. “Here is repeated the same command as in the former passage;—that they might keep it always strongly impressed upon their minds, as a principle that ought always to be steadily adhered to, viz. That all Prayer is to be offered up to God, even the Father, and to no other Person whatsoever.”

— ch. xvi. 23. *And in that day ye shall ask ME nothing : verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the FATHER in my name, He will give it you.*

N. B. Lest they should mistake and think they were to pray to Him for any thing, when he left them, and returned to the Father, he expressly forbids them to do it. “In that day, (says he) ye shall ask me nothing.” To this remark it is proper to subjoin the following: Hitherto He, (*i. e.* our Saviour Christ) had been all along present with

Directions, &c. in the New Testament. 9

with his disciples, as it were in God's stead, in some respects, with a divine power to heal bodily diseases, to instruct in the divine will, to forgive sins, and to comfort and establish them in their faith in him. In consequence of which they had recourse to him in all their wants and distresses, Matt. viii. 25, "Lord, save us, we perish," Luke xvii. 5. "Lord increase our faith." But as he was now soon going to be withdrawn from them, he acquaints them, that when that event took place, they were no more to apply to him for any thing, but to God, the Father, (*the common Father of him and of them all*) in his name. Lindsey's Apology, p. 121, 122, 3d. edit.

Rom. xv. 6. That ye may, with one mind and one mouth, glorify God, even the FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephes. ii. 18. For through Him, i. e. Christ, we both have access, by one Spirit, unto the FATHER.

— ch. iii. 14, 15. For this cause I bow my knees unto the FATHER of our Lord Jesus

10 Directions, &c. in the New Testament.

Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

— v. 20. *Giving thanks always for all things unto God, even the FATHER, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. See also Col. i. 12, ch. iii. 17.*

James iii. 9. Therewith bless we GOD, EVEN THE FATHER.

1 Pet. i. 17. And if ye call on the FATHER, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

Rev. xxi. 8, 9. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the Angel, which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

N. B. The conclusion which rises from the current and uniform language of these texts,

texts, is this,—That all Prayer is to be offered up to God, even the Father, in the name of his Son Jesus Christ. There is no command to pray to Christ. Two texts, it may perhaps be alledged, are omitted, which countenance the paying of religious worship to our Lord. The one is the baptismal form, “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*” But the act of being baptized in the name of Christ is not an act of religious worship, but only an acknowledgement of his divine authority. Thus Paul speaks of baptizing in his *own name*; the Israelites were baptized unto Moses. Neither can any argument to this purpose be justly drawn from the Son and holy Ghost being named together with the Father. The angels are named with *God and Christ.* 1 Tim. v. 21. *I charge thee,* saith the apostle, *before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels, that thou observe these things.* So 1 Sam. xii. 18. All the people feared greatly the *Lord and Samuel.* 1 Chron. xxix. 20. And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads
and

12 Directions, &c. in the New Testament.

and worshipped the Lord and the King. See also Exod. xiv. 31. Judges vii. 18, 20. 2 Chron, xx. 20. No equality can be inferred from such a conjunction, either of rank or claims ; much less does it afford any grounds for prayer to the beings thus joined with God.

The other text is, Heb. i. 6. *And when he bringeth again his first begotten into the world he saith, Let all the Angels of God worship Him.* Other passages will explain this : “Who (i. e. Jesus Christ) is gone into “heaven, and is on the right hand of “God; angels, and authorities, and powers “being made subject unto him.” 1 Pet. iii. 22. “According to the working of his “mighty power, which he wrought in “Christ, when he raised him from the dead, “and set him at his own right hand in the “heavenly places, far above all principality “and power, and might, and dominion, “and every name, that is named, not only “in this world, but also in that which “is to come, and hath put all things “under his feet, and gave him to be the “head over all things to the Church. Ephes.

i. 19,

i. 19, 20, 21, 22. These texts shew that the worship demanded of Angels was the reverence, honour, and subjection due from inferiors to their Lord. “It is not easy to discover how it can be proved from this text, that mankind are to pray to Christ.”

In a word, it should be always remembered, that particular texts and unusual phrases must be explained by the general language of scripture ; and understood in a manner agreeable to the tenor and design of its current declarations.

SECTION II.

*Religious ADDRESSES, PRAYERS, and BE-
NEDICTIONS found in the New Testa-
ment.*

Matt. vi. 9, 10. *After this manner therefore pray ye: OUR FATHER, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; THY kingdom come. THY will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.* See also Luke xi. 2.

— xi. 25, 26. *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O FATHER, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast bid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, FATHER, for so it seemed good in THY sight.* Thus Luke x. 21.

— xxiv. 39. *And he went a little further, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O MY FATHER, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as THOU wilt.*

PRAYERS, ADDRESSES, and DOXOLOGIES
*in the Book of Common Prayer, besides those
directly offered up to God the Father.*

“ THOU art the king of glory, O Christ.

“ Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.

“ When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man thou didst not abhor the Virgin’s womb.

“ When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

“ Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.

“ We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge.

“ We therefore pray thee to help thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.

“ Make them to be numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting.”

Te Deum.

— “ When two or three are gathered together in thy name.”

“ O God

16 Prayers, &c. in the New Testament.

— v. 42. *He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O MY FATHER, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, THY will be done. See likewise, Mark xiv. 36. Luke xxii. 42.*

Luke xxiii. 34. *Then said Jesus, FATHER, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

— v. 46. *And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, FATHER, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*

John xi. 41. *And Jesus lift up his eyes, and said, FATHER, I thank thee, that THOU hast heard me.*

— xii. 27, 28. *Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say, FATHER, save me from this hour? but for this cause came I unto this hour. FATHER, glorify thy name.*

— xvii. 1, 3. *These words spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes to heaven and said, FATHER, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify THEE.—This is life eternal that they might know THEE, the only true God,*

“ O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

“ O God the holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

“ O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons, and one God, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

“ Whom thou hast redeemed by thy most precious blood. By the mystery of thy holy incarnation ; by thy holy nativity and circumcision ; by thy baptism, fasting, and temptation ; by thine agony and bloody sweat ; by thy cross, and passion ; by thy precious death and burial ; by thy glorious resurrection and ascension ; and by the coming of the holy Ghost.

“ Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us.

“ Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us.

“ O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,

“ Have mercy upon us.

“ O Christ, hear us.

“ O Christ, bear us.

“ Lord, have mercy upon us.

“ Lord, have mercy upon us.

C

“ Christ

18 Prayers, &c. in the New Testament.

God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.
And so throughout particularly.

— v. 5. And now, O FATHER, glorify thou
Me with thine own self.

— v. 11. And now I am no more in the
world, but these are in the world, and I come
to THEE. Holy FATHER, keep through thine
own name those whom THOU hast given me.

— v. 13. And now I come to thee.

— v. 24. FATHER, I will that they also
whom THOU hast given me, be with me where
I am.

— v. 25. O righteous FATHER, the world
hath not known thee; but I have known thee.

Acts iv. 24, 25, 26. And when they had
heard that, they lift up their voice to God
with one accord, and said, LORD, THOU art
GOD, which hast made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that in them is; who by the
mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why
did the Heathen rage, and the people imagine
a vain thing? — And now, LORD, behold
their

" Christ, have mercy upon us.
" *Christ, have mercy upon us.*
" Lord, have mercy upon us.
" *Lord, have mercy upon us.*
" From our enemies defend us, O Christ,
" O Son of David, have mercy upon us.
" Both now and henceforth vouchsafe to
hear us O Christ.
" Graciously hear us, O Christ: gra-
ciously hear us, O Lord Christ."

Litany.

— " To whom, with thee and the holy Ghost be all honour and glory, now and for ever."

Prayer in the time of famine.

" O Lord Jesu Christ, who at thy first coming."

Collect for the 3d. Sunday in Advent.

— " Who prayed for his murderers to thee, O Jesus.

Collect for St. Stephen's day.

20 Prayers, &c. in the New Testament.

their threatenings ; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thy hand to heal ; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of the holy child Jesus.

N. B. This Prayer may serve to ascertain who was the object of their address in that Prayer, which we have Acts ch. i. 24. *And they prayed, and said, Thou L ORD, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen.* The precision and certainty in the former, elucidates the meaning, and clears up the ambiguity of the latter passage ; especially when it is considered that they had yet not received, (the spirit being not yet given) any proof of Christ's power in heaven ; supposing that power to be a foundation for prayers to Him : and as Grotius observes, they address the L ORD here under the character of the Being who *searcheth the heart*, which is the prerogative of God only ; for though Christ speaketh of himself as searching the heart and reins, yet he claims there only *delegated powers* which he had *receivcd of his FATHER*, Rev. ii. 23. compared with the 27th verse.

“ — By whom, and *with whom*, in the unity of the holy Ghost, all honour and glory be unto thee, O Father.

Prayer after the Communion.

“ O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesu Christ, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

“ For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord : Thou only, O Christ, with the holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father.”

The same.

22 Prayers, &c. in the New Testament.

verse. Rom. i. 8. *I thank my GOD through Jesus Christ, for you all.* 1 Cor. i. 4. *I thank my GOD (v. 3, GOD our FATHER) always on your behalf, for the grace of GOD which is given you in Jesus Christ.*

— xv. 57. *Thanks be to GOD, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 Cor. i. 3. *Blessed be GOD, even the FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ, the FATHER of mercies, and the GOD of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation.*

Eph. iii. 21. *Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*

1 Pet. i. 3. *Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

N. B. The

N. B. The texts in the preceeding section prove that Christ and his Apostles directed men to pray to *God, even the FATHER only.* The texts in this shew, that *that they prayed only to God, even the FATHER themselves.* Nay, it is on this subject a weighty and decisive argument, that there is no passage in the whole New Testament, that records an instance of proper prayer addressed otherwise than to the person of the FATHER, except Acts vii. 59. where Stephen at his martyrdom is represented as using these words, *Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit.* The word *God* in our translation is not in the original. It is a single instance, and a peculiar case. He seems to have spoken under the lively impressions of a *present or immediately preceding vision*, in which he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. In *such circumstances* he commended his spirit to Jesus, for whose sake he was then expiring: “ and as to the prayer for his enemies, his using the word *Lord* (observes the author of a close and valuable piece) by no means implies that it was directed to him: this is a title by which the great God him-

24 *Prayers, &c. in the New Testament.*

self, whose glory he saw, is generally addressed. See a Letter to the Bishop of Carlisle, p. 24.

As to 2 Cor. xii. 8. *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.* N. B. It is far from being clear and certain, that this is an address to Christ. When the uniform language of the preceding examples and directions is considered, it is next to a certainty, that Paul should be regarded as praying here to God the FATHER. In the 1st verse the Apostle speaks of *visions and revelations of the Lord.* He says in the 2d and 3d verses, that at the time he had these visions and revelations, whether he was in the body or out of the body, was known only to God; which shews, that by *visions and revelations of the Lord,* he means *visions and revelations of God;* and which therefore farther shews, that it was to God he prayed, *that the thorn in the flesh might depart from him.*--*Letters on the Worship of Christ,* by THEOSEBES, p. 23. Dr. Hammond thus paraphrases, "And I earnestly prayed to God to be delivered from it."

There

There is a third text, 1 Tim. i. 12. *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.* N. B. It is not consistent with the general strain of the preceding directions and examples to understand this as an address of thanks to Christ as an object of worship, but a sudden emotion of gratitude in the apostle's mind, and expression of his thankfulness to Christ for his own miraculous conversion (Acts ix.) and call to be an Apostle." LINDSEY'S *Apology*, p. 131. LE CLERE translates the words thus: "J'ai sujet de rendre graces à Jesus Christ notre Seigneur." i. e. *I owe thanks to Jesus Christ, or I have reason to be thankful to him.* The original is $\chi\alpha\rho\nu\epsilon\xi\omega$ and it is submitted to the critical reader, whether this imports more than a sense of obligation to another, or ever expresses the *act of thanksgiving.* This I observe, is denoted by $\epsilon u\chi\alpha\rho\nu\epsilon\omega$ Luke xviii. 11. John xi. 41. Rom. i. 8. vii. 25. 1 Cor. i. 4, 14. ch. xiv. 18. Phil. i. 3. 1 Thes. ii. 13. 2 Thes. i. 3. Phil. v. 4. The phrase $\chi\alpha\rho\nu\epsilon\xi\omega$ occurs, I believe, only here and Luke xvii. 9, and 2 Tim. i. 3.

SECTION III.

Devout Wishes in the New Testament.

RO M. i. 7. *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints ; Grace be to you and peace from GOD our FATHER, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

(xi. xvi. 20, 24. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all ; and 1 Cor. xvi. 23,*

Cor. i. 3. Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Cor. i. 2. *Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

— xiii. 14. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the holy Ghost be with you all.*

Gal.

*Devout WISHES that occur in the Book
of COMMON PRAYER.*

" **G**OD the Father, God the Son,
and God the holy Ghost, bless,
preserve, and keep you.

Matrimony.

" Our Lord Jesus, who hath left
power to his church to absolve all sin-
ners, who truly repent and believe in him,
of his great mercy forgive thee thine of-
fences."

Visitation of the Sick.

28 *Devout Wishes in the New Testament.*

Gal. i. 3. *Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.*

~~and~~ vi. 18. *Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.*

Eph. i. 2. *Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

~~and~~ vi. 23, 24. *Peace be to the brethren, and love, with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.*

Phil. i. 2. *Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

— iv. 23. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*

Col. i. 2. *Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

— iv. 18. *Grace be with you.*

I Thes.

Devout Wishes in the New Testament. 29

1 Thes. i. 1. Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

— ch. iii. 11, 12. Now God himself, and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you : and the Lord make you to encrease and abound in love towards one another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you : to the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our FATHER, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

— ch. v. 23, 28. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

2 Thes. i. 2. Grace unto you, and peace from GOD our FATHER, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

— ii. 16, 17. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our FATHER, which hath loved us, and hath given us ever-
lasting

30 *Devout Wishes in the New Testament.*

*lasting consolation and good hope through grace,
comfort your hearts, and establish you in every
good word and work.*

— iii. 5. *And the Lord direct your hearts
into the love of God, and into the patient wait-
ing for Christ.*

— v. 16, 18. *Now the Lord of peace
himself give you peace always, by all means.
The Lord be with you all.—The grace of our
Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*

1 Tim. i. 2. *Grace, mercy, and peace from
God our FATHER, and Jesus Christ our
Lord.*

— vi. 21. *Grace be with thee.*

2 Tim. i. 2. *To Timothy, my dearly be-
loved: grace, mercy, and peace from God
the FATHER, and Jesus Christ our Lord.*

— v. 18. *The Lord grant He may find
mercy of the Lord in that day.*

ch. iv. 22.

Devout Wishes in the New Testament. 31

— ch. iv. 22. *The Lord Jesus Christ
be with thy spirit. Grace be with you.*

*Tit. i. 4. To Titus, mine own son, after the
common faith: grace, mercy, and peace from
God the FATHER, and the Lord Jesus Christ
the Saviour.*

— ch. iii. 15. *Grace be with you all.*

*Philemon v. 3. Grace be to you, and
peace from God our FATHER, and the Lord
Jesus Christ.*

— v. 25. *The grace of our Lord Je-
sus Christ be with your spirit.*

— Heb. xiii. 20, 21. *Now the God
of peace that brought again from the dead
our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of
the sheep, through the blood of the everlast-
ing covenant, make you perfect in every good
work to do his will; working in you that which
is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus
Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever.
Amen.*

— 25. *Grace*

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— 25. *Grace be with you all.*

1 Pet. i. 2. *Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.*

— v. x. 14. *The GOD of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus.*

2 Pet. i. 2. *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of GOD, and Jesus our Lord.*

2 John v. iii. *Grace be with you, mercy and peace from GOD the FATHER, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the FATHER, in truth and love.*

Jude v. 2. *Mercy unto you, and peace and love be multiplied.*

Rev. i. 4, 5. *Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits*

spirits which are before the throne ; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.

— xxii. 21. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

“ N. B. The above passages are only pious wishes, not prayers. That this is the true interpretation and not mere assertion, appears from Rev. i. 4. Otherwise it may as well be said, that the writer prays to the *seven spirits* there named, which are afterwards in the same book, v. 6, called the *Lamb’s Eyes*; i. e. Christ’s angels or messengers, sent forth into all the world.” Lindsey’s *Apology*, p. 132.

SECTION IV.

DOXOLOGIES collected from the NEW
TESTAMENT.

MATT. vi. 13. *For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory.*
Amen.

— Luke ii. 14. *Glory to God in the highest.*

— Rom. i. 25. *More than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*

— xi. 33, 36. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.— For of Him, through Him, and to Him are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

— xvi. 25, 27. *Now to him that is of power to establish you, according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ.—To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen.*

N. B. The *only wise God*, is the proper character of the FATHER alone.

2 Cor,

DIRECTIONS and PRECEDENTS as to the
Object of Worship ; and DOXOLOGIES col-
lected from the Writings of DISSENTERS.

“ **R**ELIGIOUS worship is to be given to God the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost ; and to Him alone.”

The Assembly’s Conf. of Faith, ch. 21.

“ The second part of prayer is adoration, and it contains, (1) A mention of his nature as God ; and this includes his most original properties and perfections. His unity of essence, that there is no other God besides Him. His unconceiveable subsistence in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit ; which mystery of the Trinity is a most proper object of our adoration and wonder ; since it so much surpasses our understanding.”

Watt’s Guide to Prayer, p. 6.

“ To thee, O Father, Son, and holy Spirit, belong everlasting power and honour.”

Ibid p. 41.

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2 Cor. xi. 31. *The GOD and FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore.*

Gal. i. 4, 5. *According to the will of GOD the FATHER, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Ephes. iii. 20, 21. *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto HIM be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

Phil. iv. 10. *Now unto GOD even our FATHER, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

I Tim. i. 17. *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise GOD, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

— vi. 14, 15, 16. — *Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in his time he shall shew, who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling*

" We must give honour to the three Persons in the Godhead distinctly : To the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost ; that great and sacred name into which we were baptized."

" We pay our homage to the Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the holy Ghost ; for these Three are One. We pay our homage to the exalted Redeemer, who is the faithful Witness. We also worship the holy Ghost, the Comforter."

Henry's Method of Prayer.

" We may conclude all with Doxologies or solemn praises to God, ascribing honour and glory to the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost."

Ibid.

" Now to God the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost, that great name into which I was baptized, be honour and glory, dominion and praise, for ever and ever. Amen."

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in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath, or can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

N. B. This passage doth not include Jesus Christ; but exclude Him: for God is to shew him at his appearing, and He is not the Being who dwelleth in light inaccessible, but is the *image* of the invisible God.

1 Pet. v. 10, 11. But the GOD of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, strengthen you; — to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Jude v. 24, 25. Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise GOD our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen. See Rom. xvi. 25, 27.

Rev. iv.

“ To Him (i. e. Jesus Christ) with the Father and eternal Spirit, be glory and praise, now and for ever.

“ Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, and our God, in Three Persons, Father, Son, and holy Ghost, be honour and glory, dominion and praise henceforth and for ever. Amen.

“ Now to God the Father, Son, and Spirit, be ascribed the kingdom, power, and glory, henceforth and for ever.”

The same.

“ — Through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee, O Father, and thine holy Spirit, be everlasting praises.”

DODDRIGE’s Address to a Master of a Family.

The above quotations are specimens of the opinions and practices received by many Dissenters. From the very nature of their general principles it happily results that nothing is established among them under the

Rev. iv. 8, 11. *And they rest not day and night; saying, Holy, holy, LORD GOD Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come: And when those Beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

N. B. The appropriate characters of God the FATHER, in this famous passage, are, (1.) Holy Lord God Almighty. (2.) Who was, and is, and is to come. (3.) Who liveth for ever and ever. (4.) Who sitteth on the throne. These terms or characters are never applied to the Son or the holy Ghost.

— ch. vii. 11, 12. *All the Angels — fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped GOD, saying, Amen. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our GOD, for ever and ever. Amen.*

authority and sanction of human laws: nor is any uniformity, in this point, observed among them. Some few of their ministers may, perhaps, run into direct addresses to Christ, and even to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; but the most usual form of *Trinitarian* worship retained amongst them, it is well known, are confined to such doxologies as are above quoted. And it has been the effect of their freedom from the shackles of an establishment, that many Dissenting Societies have long since entirely laid aside or discarded the unscriptural and corrupt modes of *trinitarian* worship; and exhibited the purity and simplicity of the Christian doctrine in the worship of the only living and true God; the one God and Father of all, through Jesus Christ.

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— xv. 3. *And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.*

— xix. 1. *I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluja: Salvation and glory, and honour, and power, unto the LORD our God.*

**DOXOLOGIES TO GOD the FATHER, and
to CHRIST.**

Rev. v. 13. *And every creature heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

— vii. 9. 10. *A great multitude—cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*

DOXOLOGIES

DOXOLOGIES applied to CHRIST.

2 Pet. iii. 8. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Rev. i. 5, 6. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto GOD and his FATHER; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

— v. 9. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and has redeemed us unto GOD by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

— v. 11, 12. And I beheld and heard the voice of many Angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

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N. B. It may be remarked on the preceding classes of doxologies, that in one only is there a direct address to our blessed Saviour, viz. ch. v. 9, and then he is represented as present and visible. It is no more than an expression of high esteem and grateful joy in his character, similar to the ascriptions made by the multitudes, as he entered into Jerusalem, who cried, saying, *Hosanna to the Son of David*; *blessed is He that cometh in the name of the LORD*; *Hosanna in the highest*. Matt. xxi. 9. Yet it appears that they had no design to pay him honour as to the supreme God; for when *all the city was moved*, saying, *Who is this?* The multitude said, *This is Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee*, v. 11. Dr. DODDRIDGE thus paraphrases the acclamation of the people: “Hosanna to the great illustrious Son of David! may the most exalted honours be paid him! may continued prosperity attend him!”

In the same manner are these doxologies to be explained; they are *devout wishes* that the character of Christ may receive respect and honour, acknowledgments of its great excellence,

excellence, worth, and dignity; and expressive of earnest desires that it may be known and reverenced. "They are to be interpreted as a brief and summary form of prayer (like the benedictions and salutations ranged in a former section) in which GOD is understood to be addressed, so to direct and over-rule the affairs of the world, to do honour to Jesus, that all men may receive his gospel, and be made virtuous and happy for ever by it." "Praise and honour will ever be due to Christ, for his virtuous sufferings in the cause of truth and righteousness: because he was the *Lamb slain*: but this can not afford the least shadow of proof for addressing prayer to Him. Lindsey's *Two Dissertations*, p. 106, and sequel p. 97.

DOXOLOGIES, in which there is an ambiguity; or which seem capable of being applied either to GOD the FATHER, or to Jesus Christ.

Rom. ix. v. *Whose are the Fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

N. B.

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N. B. These words may be rendered thus, *Of whom Christ was, by his natural descent, who was more or greater than all, God be blessed for ever, Amen.* Or thus, *the God over all, the supreme God, be blessed for ever.* The consideration which determines us to apply this doxology to God the Father alone, is, that the word εὐλογῶντος the *blessed*, is a term always applied to Him only; as Mark xii. 61. Luke i. 68. Rom. i. 25. 2 Cor. i. 3. ch. xi. 31. Eph. i. 3, 1 Pet. i. 3. Mary, Christ, and others, are not stiled εὐλογήτοι in the active voice, but εὐλογημένοι in the passive. EN J E D I N U S in loc.

2 Tim. iv. 18. *And the L ORD shall deliver me from every evil work. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Heb. xii. 20, 21. *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will; working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

N. B.

N. B. It may tend to ascertain, that this dubious doxology, if we reflect that the *God of Peace* is the principal antecedent. He is the Being who is the source of the blessings here mentioned; the object to whom the devout wishes here expressed refer. Christ the minister and medium of them.

I Pet. iv. 11. *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

N. B. Some would refer this doxology to Jesus Christ; but, as CALVIN and ESTIUS have well observed, the connection-and circumstances of the place require that it be rather referred unto GOD; — especiall yas the preceding words are — “that God in all things may be glorified. BENSON in loc.

On the preceding collection of texts, I would offer a remark or two. The difference between the language of the Scriptures and that of the Book of Common Prayer is so striking

ing and obvious, that it cannot escape the notice of the most careless reader. The latter so far from being in conformity with the former, stands in direct contrast with it. It is the uniform language and sense of these numerous passages, that GOD the FATHER only is exhibited as the object of religious address and prayer. Prayer to Jesus Christ rests at most but on doubtful passages and ambiguous expressions, such as Acts vii. 59. 2 Cor. xiii. 8. So far is it from being the true, though it may be the catholic faith, that “we should worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;” so far is it from being the language or document of scripture, that “that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we should believe of the Son, and of the holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality.”

And whereas some learned and candid writers have supposed that the prohibition under the Old Testament) *thou shalt have no other God but me*) does by no means preclude God himself from giving right to another to receive a subordinate religious worship, when he judges the person worthy of it,

it, and thinks fit to appoint it;— and that the first commandment would not oblige us under the gospel, in opposition to the plain and express declaration of Christ and his Apostles, — whereas some have been of this opinion, it seems by no means necessary to discuss this point; for the question is brought to a shorter issue by appealing to the New Testament itself; how stands the *Fact*? Is there any thing there like a repeal of the first commandment? Does Christ anywhere propose himself as an object of religious worship? when he prays himself, is it not to the Father? When he instructs his disciples how to pray, doth he not enjoin them to pray to the Father?

“ Is God’s requiring men to honour the Son as they honour the Father ; that is, that all men should believe in, and obey the Son as they do the Father?—Is God’s commanding all the angels to worship him, as they are present with him, and behold his glory ?

— Is God’s commanding that every knee should bow at the name of Jesus, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father ; by which no more is in-

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tended than this, that all men should acknowledge him to be their Lord, their only Saviour and Redeemer? — Is all this any proof that we ought to offer prayer to the Son? Is this a repeal of that absolute prohibition, as delivered at *Mount Sinai*, of any other object of worship besides the only true God?" *An Impartial Enquiry what is the Test of our Saviour's Miracles;* printed for Noon, 1750, p. 51, 52.

It may, perhaps, be objected, that in the preceding collection, are omitted many passages in which Christ is expressly said to have been worshipped. To obviate this objection, and to justify the omission, as an omission of Texts that are not to the point, I will subjoin a paragraph or two from Mr. LINDSEY's *Sequel to his Apology*, p. 93, 94.

"The equivocal meaning of the term *worship* in the sacred writings, imposes upon many, and leads them into wrong apprehension of the honour due to Christ. In general it signifies the respect that is paid to superiors: and it is applied to men and angels: — *king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face*

face and worshipped Daniel, Dan. ii. 41.—the servant fell down and worshipped his Lord. Matt. xviii. v. 26.

“ The Evangelists also make frequent mention of Christ being worshipped — by the wise men in his infancy. (N. B. Herod designed to come and worship him) Matt. ii. 11, 8.—by the leper, viii. 2.—by the ruler, ix. 18.— by the men in the ship, xiv. 33.—by the woman of Canaan, xi. 25.—by the man with an unclean spirit, i. e. disordered in his senses, Mark v. 8.—by the man healed, who was born blind, John ix. 38.— In all these instances, the worship paid to him was that reverence which was due to the Messiah, the great Prophet of the most high God, acting by an immediate authority from him.

“ When the disciples saw their master again after his resurrection, Matt. xxviii. 9, 17, relates that they twice worshipped him. St. Luke also giving an account of his ascension into heaven, says, xxiv. 51, 52, 53. *It came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven; and they having worshipped him, returned to*

Jerusalem with great joy ; and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. The evangelist here very properly describes the disciples as *worshipping* the Lord Jesus, i. e. *bowing with reverence* to him as he was carried up into heaven. But this worship which they paid to him, did by no means imply that he was the object of prayer, or of divine worship. What that object was, the evangelist points out immediately after, when he tells us, *they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.*

END OF THE INTRODUCTION.

T H E

T H E
A D D R E S S.

M Y C H R I S T I A N F R I E N D S ,

IN the preceeding pages have been laid before you two plans of religious worship: one expressed in the words of Scripture, and drawn from that unerring source of divine truth: the other laid down in the language of human invention, and resting upon the authority of human opinion, practice, and law. There is an evident and striking difference and contrariety between these two plans of worship. In the *former*, prayers and praises are offered up to one infinitely glorious Being or Person, under the denomination of "Our Father in heaven," "the Father," "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and he is set forth as the only object of religious worship. In the *latter*, three Persons or Beings are invoked, and doxologies are presented to Father, Son, and holy Ghost. This may properly be called *Trinitarian*, as the other deserves the name of *Unitarian* worship.

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The *latter* is the worship which the law of these lands has established, and which is blended with all the services of the dominant religion. The matter of present enquiry, and upon which I would now plainly and earnestly, and yet candidly address you, is,—~~To~~ which plan you *ought* to conform? or, whether you may indifferently adopt either? The point I mean to discuss, is not a question relative to expediency and interest, but *duty*. It is a matter which affects the *conscience* of such as embrace Christianity, and do really believe it to be a true and divine system of faith and practice.

I address you, as genuine Christians; and the argument which most obviously suggests itself upon the question, is this—that the former plan is *scriptural*, the latter merely *human*. The authority of the former claims obedience.

Christianity is an invaluable blessing, because it hath done what the different systems of Paganism did never effect; what the investigations of philosophers did never produce: it has given a just form and model of religious worship. It hath exhibited to us the *object* of adoration, and taught us *how* to worship him. In the directions and examples that have been now laid before you, there is a beautiful simplicity united with an affecting sublimity. The worship here prescribed does not divide the affections—nor distract the thoughts—nor degrade the mind; as did the various

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and debasing modes of Paganism. By this rule the heart is elevated to *one* supreme object;—is invited to his throne by the endearing representations of his *paternal* character; and is disposed cheerfully to present a service, the acts of which are easy as well as rational, being not burdensome and bloody sacrifices, but the natural offerings of an humble and grateful mind, Prayer and Praise.

But the excellency of the plan, though that be a strong inducement faithfully to adhere to it, is not the argument which I mean to urge. The AUTHORITY of it is the consideration which here demands our attention. Whom should you obey? whose instructions should you receive? shall *they* be your guides who direct and require you to pray to the Father, Son, and holy Ghost; or *He* who hath told us that the “true worshippers must worship the Father?” *They* who assert, that “It is our bounden duty to pray unto the Son;” or *He*, who hath said, “In that day ye shall ask “Me nothing: whatsoever ye shall ask the “Father in my name, He shall give it to “you?” If the *true* and *faithful* *Witness*, (Rev. iii. 14) hath instructed and taught you to whom to address your prayers and praises, what is your duty but thankfully to receive his informations, and conscientiously to adhere to them? “Ought you not to obey “God rather than men!”

It matters not upon what grounds *men* propose their rules, or convert their ienti-ments into a law. Whether they plead the honour of their Redeemer ; whether they infer their directions from the character He sustains ; or whether they plead the very early practice of Christians after the apostolic age. All these pleas are only excuses for substituting their own desires in the room of, and departing from, the sacred standard. If they prescribe, as in this case, what God hath not required, all that they can set before us is only *their* opinion, *their* deduc-tions, *their* will ; not God's word and will. Let them be ever so pious and learned, their injunctions are still only human. And the question returns, shall we hear men rather than God ? If he hath taught us, what need is there for men's directions ? Is not the model of worship He hath given to us full and complete ? Can there be deficiencies in it which human invention shall supply : or errors which human wisdom is to correct ? Or, if his rule be plain and explicit, are we at liberty to depart from it, and to substitute another in its room ?

Surely the worship which is not regulated by the New Testament is not *Christian* wor-ship. So far as we deviate from the word of Christ, we cease to be *his* servants ; so far as our worship is founded on the commandments of men, we become the servants of men ; for we are his servants [whose commands

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we obey. This is a serious, striking, weighty thought. It matters not by how many, or how devoutly certain invocations, prayers, and doxologies are used : the great question is, are they to be found in the New Testament ? You see they are not. How then can they be used without violating that reverence we owe to God ; without violating the plain authoritative directions he has given to us ? It deserves, Christians, your calm and serious consideration, whether you can do this, and be blameless ? Will you plead that you are actuated by love and reverence to the Redeemer, and by your sacred regards to the holy Spirit ? But what reverence and love is that, which induces you, instead of closely adhering to, notoriously to deviate from the plan given by your great lawgiver ? What sacred regards are those which lead you to set aside, or go beyond the directions of the Spirit of truth ? Be persuaded to recollect or consider well the determination of your great Lord, as to such cases, viz. all deviations from the express law of God ? " In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." The words imply more than they express ; they imply not only that their worship is unprofitable, but that it is displeasing to God, and will be followed with unhappy consequences.

The whole history of the divine dispensations confirms and illustrates the importance

tance of this declaration. For what purposes were revelations of the divine will made to men in the different ages of the world, but to guide and regulate their worship? Why were the people of the Jews visited with heavy judgments, given up to the designs and power of their enemies, and afflicted with the calamities of long and repeated captivities; — but to punish their departure from the plan of religious worship they had received through the hands of Moses? Time would fail me, were I to enumerate the various examples of severe punishments, which, according to the sacred history, have followed deviations from the divine rule. The recollection of one or two will be pertinent in this connection.

Striking is the story of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the sons of Aaron; who presuming to burn incense in the tabernacle with other fire than that which God had, in an extraordinary manner, provided were struck dead by fire from heaven. Their crime is represented by the historian as consisting in this, that they offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And their death was attended with this express and solemn lesson: “Then *Moses* said unto *Aaron*, this is it that the *LORD* spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.” Lev. x. i. 3.

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The other example shall be taken from the New Testament, and is furnished by the conduct and case of the *Corinthian* converts. They mistook the design of the Lord's Supper, and perverted this simple institution. Our Lord ordained it as a discriminating act of grateful remembrance of him ; they united and blended it with a common social meal. It was instituted as a bond of union and affection among Christians ; they, by carrying each his own provision, and eating apart, made it the occasion of strife and division. It was meant to be an act of devotion, they abused it to the gratification of animal appetites, and to indulge to excess. For this they were visited with temporal calamities : they were punished with bodily weakness, sickness, and death.

These examples exhibit the awful consequences of deviating from the divine appointment ; whether we supersede them by acting *without order*, as did the sons of *Aaron*, or corrupt them by *diverting them from the original intention*, as did the *Corinthians*. The punishment, in both cases, may appear severe. But were they not justly incurred ? Were they not expedient ? Shall the purity of God's institutions be left unguarded ? Shall disobedience to God, or the indulgence of vicious dispositions go unpunished, because practised under the veil of forms of religion ? In the infancy of the *Jewish* and *Christian* dispensations it was more peculiarly

peculiarly proper to animadvert upon all deviations from the prescribed appointment. Had not transgressions been attended with severe sanctions, their authority would have been enervated, and a licence given to the corruption of them. The utility, the effect, the very existence of these dispensations, depended on the support and enforcement their laws received, and on the exactness and purity with which they were at first observed. The judgments with which those were visited who departed from or corrupted the divine institutions, are a warning to all ages of the guilt and danger of such a conduct. The lesson which they read to us is this, that it is a dangerous thing in the service of God, to decline from his own institutions: we have to do with a power which is wise to prescribe his own worship; just to require what he hath prescribed; and powerful to revenge that which he hath not required.*

But if in matters which relate to the *ceremonial* of religion, it is sinful and dangerous to pervert divine appointments, or to act without a rule, what apprehensions may we justly entertain concerning the guilt and consequences of such a conduct, with respect to the *object* of worship. This is a leading and essential point in revealed religion. It is the grand design of a prescribed

* Bishop Hall.

scribed model to ascertain and limit this. It was therefore piously and justly said by those antient Christians the Vandois, in their confession of faith presented to Francis I. 1541. " We ought to use no other " prayers than those which are contained " in the holy Scripture ; or such other as " are conformable to them for substance." * To deviate from our model in *any* instance, is to set up our wisdom against the divine, and to oppose our authority to that of God. But to do it in *this* instance is to set aside the great object of adoration himself, and to give his glory to another.

" With respect to the worship of Father, Son, and holy Ghost, whether as distinct Gods, or as being one God, all Christians, who can read the New Testament, may plainly see, that this worship is so far from being commanded or authorised by the sacred writers, that the worship there required is absolutely inconsistent with it ; the one supreme God, who is generally described by the character of Father, being as constantly set forth as the only object to whom, or to whose ultimate glory all religious worship should be directed. The Church of *Rome* had as good a right to impose the worship of Angels, Saints, and the Virgin *Mary* upon the consciences of men, as the Church

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* As quoted in Lindsey's Apology, p. 175.

of England, or any other Protestant Church, had to impose the invocation of our blessed Lord, or the worship of the holy Spirit as God, and of three Persons as one God. It is not pretended that this latter is as bad as the former; but as both owe all their support to the authority of men, without any warrant from the word of God.* It is strongly urged upon your consciences, my brethren, which model you ought to adopt; which authority you ought to obey; the the Scriptures, or human directions?—God or Man?

The answer is very plain and obvious. And, if your minds at all enter into the design of this reasoning, to what conduct, my brethren, must it lead you? but to a modest and quiet separation from a church which departs from the simplicity of the plan prescribed by God; a church which invokes and worships a plurality of divine Persons, instead of directing all its prayers to God the *Father* only? If you be convinced that there is such a contrariety and repugnance between the model of worship laid down in the gospel, and that enjoined and practised by any Christian Church, it is not easy to reconcile a continued attendance on the worship of such a Church with integrity and truth.

It

* Appeal to the Common Sense of Christian People.

It is a leading and essential qualification of Christian devotion, that we worship the Father in *spirit* and in *truth*. External worship is a duty only as it is bearing our testimony to the belief of a God and his providence, and is calculated to impress and diffuse sentiments of piety around us. But it cannot be genuine, and acceptable to the Being who looketh at the heart, any further than as it is dictated by the inward veneration of his name, and is correspondent to the sentiments of the heart. Were we to address a fellow creature under a character which we are convinced doth not belong to him, merely in compliance with some established forms of compliment, our own minds must accuse us of insincerity ; and did others know the dissonance between our language and our sentiments, they would condemn our hypocrisy. How much more blameable is our duplicity in the worship of the God of truth ?

Did you certainly know that any who join in acts of public worship inwardly believed in their hearts that there was no God, or that he was not to be worshipped, nor would reward them that diligently seek him, would you not judge such persons as acting an inconsistent and insincere part ? as contradicting their own convictions, and assuming false appearances ? Could you regard such as honest men ? Be persuaded then to reflect how nearly your conduct resembleth theirs,

if you continue to join in the worship of beings, who, you are convinced, have no claim, on the authority of our only rule, to such prayer and praises as are offered to them? Can you exculpate yourselves, in this case, from the charge of insincerity?

Were you engaged to draw up forms of prayer for Christian societies, would you insert in them these petitions and thanksgivings, in which you yourselves could not join as not agreeable to the divine rule? Is it more consistent with godly sincerity, to adopt such already drawn up by others? Doth not integrity of character, as well as reverence for God's word, remonstrate against it? In private devotions, where you are left perfectly to your own judgment and choice, do you, if you be *Unitarians*, worship according to *Trinitarian* sentiments, and in *Trinitarian* language? For what reason do you discard it? But because your judgment is convinced that it is erroneous; and this being your conviction, you would worship the Father only, with the language of sincerity and truth. And will the circumstance of the worship being public and social, afford sufficient reason for dispensing with sincerity and truth?

If any actions of our lives ought to be clear and explicit, all those solemn actions in which we professedly have more immediately to do with the God of truth, ought to be so. On this principle did the Apostle reason

reason and exhort : on this principle did the first *Christians* conduct themselves, even to the expence of every interest, and of life itself.

When the converts to Christianity at *Corinth* were exposed to frequent temptations to join their *Heathen* neighbours in their feasts upon the sacrifices offered to idols, and seemed to have apprehended that they might innocently concur herein, as they were inwardly convinced that an idol was nothing, and by partaking of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, were fenced against any guilt and danger attendant on such a compliance ; the Apostle argued, remonstrated, exhorted against it, as a practice ensharing to others, and sinful in itself, as a real participation in idolatrous worship.* The *Christians*, who, in after-times, exposed themselves to all the miseries and torments which their persecutors could inflict upon them, acted upon principles of perfect integrity. Though they might, in some cases, have screened themselves, without a verbal renunciation of Christianity ; though all that was sometimes required of them was to burn incense before the images of the gods ; yet, because this action would have involved them in the guilt of insincerity and duplicity, and have spoken a language different from the

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* See Locke on 1 Cor. ch. viii. and x.

sentiments of their minds ; therefore, they endured every evil, and death itself, rather than by words or deeds contradict their convictions.

It is not the design of alledging these examples to put the prayers and praises offered up to *Christ* and the *holy Spirit* upon a rank with the worship paid to the idols of the *Heathens* ; but to shew that if we be satisfied that such prayers and praises are not authorised by the divine rule, to join in them is as really repugnant to truth and sincerity as it would have been for the first *Christians*, in a manner the slightest and least explicit, to have appeared to do honour to those idols. In either case such a conduct is expressive of a faith which the understanding discards : a concurrence in *Trinitarian* worship implies an approbation of that worship as just and divinely authorised ; but if we have not this opinion of it, can we be justified in signifying it by our actions ? Might not then the first *Christians* have been vindicated, had they thrown incense upon the altars of the idols ? To speak and act one thing, and mean another, a designed variance between our lips and hearts, must in all cases be censurable ; be criminal. It was nobly said by a late very worthy person,* “ Caballing, temporising, I scorn ; ” and

* Mr. HOLLIS.

" and seek only truth and freedom : and
" think with Cato, that to swerve a line,
" is by degrees to lose all centre."

On this ground the conduct of the philosophers, and of *Socrates* in particular, deserves severe censure. He acknowledged in reality one only divinity, and worshipped with the people that multitude of infamous idols, which antient superstition had heaped up during a long succession of ages. He held peculiar opinions in the schools, but followed the multitude in the temples. As a philosopher, he despised and detested the idols in secret : as a citizen of *Athens*, and a senator, he paid them in public the same adoration with others ; by so much the more to be condemned, saith St. *Augustin*, as that worship, which was only external and dissembled, seemed to the people to be the effect of sincerity and conviction.*

Doth not this behaviour fix on his character the stigma of disingenuity, prevarication, and cowardice ? How much more upright and manly was the conduct, to which by the command of their GOD, the captive *Jews* were formed. They were required to make an open and free confession of their faith in the true GOD, and to avow their contempt of idolatry : " Thus shall ye say unto them, the gods that have not

F 2 " made

* Rollin's Antient History, vol. 5, b. 9, ch. 4, sec. 8.

" made the heavens and the earth, even
 " they shall perish from the earth, and
 " from under these heavens." Jer. x. 11.
 Whatever *Pagan* philosophy may prescribe
 to its votaries, true religion doth not per-
 mit its followers to connive at or join in
 worship that is false and contrary to the di-
 vine law : It commands us to be ingenuous
 and sincere advocates for truth.

" There is nothing (to adopt the reasoning
 of an excellent piece) more diametrically
 opposite to every thing Christian, than the
 great maxim of the heathen philosophers
 in former times, and of unbelievers in these,
viz. to think with the wise, and act with the vulgar. The true Christian is a character
 that is all of a piece. What he believes, he
 openly professes, and acts upon. He is stu-
 dious to avoid even the appearance of evil,
 and therefore dreads giving the least coun-
 tenance to any system, or mode of worship,
 which in his own judgment he condemns.
 He fears God, and fears nothing else ; and
 provided his own heart does not condemn him,
he cures not what men may say of him, or do to him."*

Some perhaps may attempt to vindicate a
 compliance with the worship they disap-
 prove

* A Letter to a Layman on Mr. Lindsey's Proposal,
 &c. Wilkie, 1774, p. 22.

prove and condemn by the case of *Naaman*, 2 Kings v. 17. He declares to *Elisha*,
 " Thy servant will henceforth offer neither
 " burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other
 " Gods, but unto the *LORD*; and then
 " he adds, in this the *LORD* pardon thy
 " servant, that when my master goeth
 " into the house of *Rimmon* to worship,
 " and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow
 " myself in the houle of *Rimmon*, the
 " *LORD* pardon thy servant in this thing."
 " And the prophet said unto him, Go in
 peace." It is pleaded, that the prophet
 countenanced and encouraged the *Affyrian*
 convert in an act of religious homage to an
 idol. But the question is, whether this be
 a just and fair construction? *Naaman* was
 an attendant on his sovereign when he went
 to worship *Rimmon*, who could not well bow
 if his servant on whom he leapt did not
 bend his body at the same time. Now
 after declaring his determination to sacrifice
 to the true God only, is it probable that he
 meant any thing more than that this neces-
 sary change of his posture, in his attendance
 on his prince to the house of *Rimmon*, might
 not be imputed to him as an act of worship,
 or as a profession of worshipping *Rimmon*?
 Considering the notoriety of his miraculous
 cure, it is not improbable that he avowed,
 among the *Syrians*, his sole veneration of
 the *LORD*; and then what was there in his
 conduct to be reproved; or to justify those

who make professions in religion disconsonant to their inward sentiments.*

But supposing that *Naaman* was permitted to bow to the idol : “ The proper answer is, that we have nothing to do with the licence given by a prophet to a *Heathen* man in any particular instance ; nor can fetch our justification thence in any doubtful point. The crime of dissembling and prevaricating in the case of God’s worship, is exactly the same under the gospel as it would have been in former times for an *Israelite* to have dissembled and worshipped *God* and *Baal*. What a *Heathen* did, or was permitted by a prophet to do, (if he was permitted) can be nothing to a *Christian*, who is under covenant. A citizen and stranger are not under the same obligations. An *Israelite* and a *Christian* are citizens of a community, are subjects to God in a peculiar sense ; and the duties required of them cannot be dispensed with because a *Heathen* *Naaman* is excused.”†

But, perhaps, another plea will be urged, viz. “ That you can, and do, pass over and avoid repeating any thing in the Liturgy, or silently saying *Amen* to any thing in other prayers which you disapprove. I am sensible that many gentlemen take this method

of

* See Patrick and Le Clerc in loc.

† Lindsey’s Sermon on March 29, 1778.

of stopping their mouths, and withholding their assent, when the priest reads or the clerk and people devoutly repeat such passages of the Liturgy as are utterly subversive of the *Unitarian* scheme : but this salvo is not sufficient ; for at this rate you may join in the worship of a *Popish* church, and that, whether you understand the *Latin* prayers or not. If you do not happen to understand *Latin*, then while the priest is reading *Latin* prayers, you may do the same as you now do when the minister of the parish reads those parts of the *Liturgy*, which you say you cannot possibly understand. What that is you know best, whether you pray secretly, or are entirely idle and thoughtless, or indulging vain thoughts. If you do understand the *Latin* prayers, then you may do the same as you do with the *Liturgy*; that is, join with the worship, where it is consistent with your notions of religion, and keep silence, and withhold your assent, when the priest and people about you are adoring a crucifix, are worshipping an image of GOD, or praying to saints and angels. The reasons why you cannot be members of such a church, are as much reasons why you should not be members of the church of *England*, until you have renounced the doctrines condemned by Her. And think one moment, whether that principle of conduct can be good, righteous, and eligible, which will admit

you as well to be members of the superstitious and idolatrous church of *Rome*, as of the church of *England* itself? Nay, I cannot see, why the principles you act upon, will not as well permit you to be stated members of a *Mahometan* assembly; where you might avoid reverencing *Mahomet*, exactly in the same way as you now avoid giving supreme glory to God the Son, and *holy Ghost*: and yet, your being constant members of a *Mahometan* assembly, especially in a place where *Christian* churches were within your reach, would be an evidence in the apprehension of all mankind, that you were really *Mahometans*. Thus being constant members of a *Trinitarian* Church, especially in a place where *Unitarian Societies* are within your reach, is, in the apprehension of all mankind, an evidence that you are really a *Trinitarian*.

“ It is in vain for you to protest against a Fact. It lays open only your self-contradiction and hypocrisy the more.

“ If you really look upon the passages before recited out of the *Liturgy* to be contrary to truth and the *holy scripture*, and to contain in them contradictions and idolatry, is there not as much reason that you should leave the communion of the church? The church cannot look upon you as sound members. She disowns you, and renounces all relation to you. Act a consistent part; either leave her worship which you disapprove; or else fulfil

fulfil her earnest wishes, viz. learn to believe her most sacred doctrines, and to adore the awful mysteries which she teaches. Leave your hypocrisy; dare not any longer to trifle with men and with a heart-searching God; be not ashamed of the truth in an unbelieving and scoffing age: *be faithful to the death, and you shall inherit the crown of life.*"*

But if, Christian Brethren, after all that has been argued upon in this remonstrance, you can still deem it no crime to dissemble in the worship of the God of truth; if you can reconcile it to your own minds to pray unto Him, or to *appear* to pray unto Him, in the language of error and falsehood (for such must the Trinitarian forms be in your opinion); if you can think it no wise inconsistent with religious integrity to join with those who worship *three Gods*, or a *Trinity in Unity*, while you yourselves are convinced that there is but *one GOD, even the FATHER*; if you can adopt, or appear to adopt strains of devotion repugnant to your own judgments, yet be persuaded to consider the affair in *another light*, and to think what you owe to the *Christian cause*. Reflect whether

* The preceeding paragraphs are borrowed, with a little variation, from a close and nervous piece of Mr. Hallet, entitled, *An Address to Conforming Arians*, 1735, reprinted in *The Cordial for Low Spirits*, 1763, vol. 2. p. 400 --- 404.

whether it be reconcileable with your obligations to its divine Founder to countenance and support the corruption of his religion ; in a point too, where it concerns us most of all to preserve it pure and undefiled, namely, in the knowledge and worship of the only true God, *whom to know, is life eternal.*

CHRISTIANITY, since the author of it left our world, and his inspired apostles finished their course, hath been left in the hands of those who embrace it, without any supernatural illumination, and immediate divine exertions. It is entrusted to believers, and to their faithful efforts on its behalf. The gospel is a sacred deposit, which is to be preserved with all fidelity and attention. It is not sufficient either to answer the purposes of providence or to secure the benefits of the gospel, that we embrace it, unless we adhere to it : nor that we embrace something under the name of the gospel, if it be not the pure and genuine gospel, not encumbered by human additions, nor disguised by human doctrines. This is the exhortation of the apostle, “ As ye have therefore received *Christ Jesus* the Lord, so walk ; beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after *Christ* : Ye are complete in Him.” Col. ii. 6, 8, 10. The manner in which he restrains

strains and limits the devout and benevolent benediction, with which he closes his epistle to the *Ephesians*, may serve to give us an idea how his mind was affected with the importance of preserving Christianity in its first purity. "Grace, says he, be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity : in *incorruption*, i. e. without the mixing or joining any thing with him in the work of our salvation, that may render the gospel useless or ineffectual.*

Very strong and solemn is his mode of expression on this point in another place, *Gal.* i. 8. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed." With seriousness and solemnity doth he exhort and charge *Timothy* on this head ; "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before *Christ Jesus*, who before *Pontius Pilate* witnessed a good confession ; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebutable, until the appearing of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14. Here it is proper to refer you to the great design of all the Epistles addressed to the Seven Churches in *Asia* ; it is to recover them to, and preserve them in the purity of the Christian faith, worship, and manners. The whole series of the succeeding prophetic

* See Locke in Eph.

tic visions, in what obscurity soever the meaning of particular scenes may be involved, evidently holds forth awful judgments against such as "worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in the forehead or the hand :" and great honours and rewards to them "who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of *Jesus*."

These are views of your duty which deserve your serious attention. And, if you apply them to the case we are arguing, I can scarcely doubt but you will see the obligation under which you lie to withdraw from a church, where the worship is repugnant to the plan of devotion taught us in the New Testament ; a church in which "one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity is worshipped ;" in which hearty thanks are given, and addresses are made to God the *Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost.*" Doth such a church keep, in incorruption and without a spot, the faith of *Christ*, which instructs us to worship the *Father* ; to give thanks unto God even the *Father by Him*. Let it be considered, that by continuing to join with a society whose offices of devotion are so very distant from the genuine gospel of *Jesus Christ*, you countenance, and as far as the influence of your conduct and example can extend, you support a gross corruption of Christianity.

No good can be expected from retaining the corruptions of Christianity. It can never

heven display its beauty and power until they be all removed. The corruptions we are now exhorting you to discard, have been copied into our established Liturgy, from that of the most corrupt *Christian* church. The doxology repeated at the end of every psalm, and which is not found in the scriptures, flows from this source, and had its original in *papal* impositions. "Pope *Damasus*, Sir *Isaac Newton* observes, is said to have decreed in a *Roman* council, that glory to the *Father*, and to the *Son*, and to the *Holy Ghost*, should be said or sung at the end of the psalms. This was about the end of the 4th century. Let *Protestants* reflect, that unscriptural doxology is still made use of at the end of every psalm, by the express authority of the pope of *Rome*, whose jurisdiction in this church and kingdom has been in the most solemn manner protested against.*

The doctrine of the Trinity derives its main support from being interwoven with all the devotional services of the church of *England*. This gives it a deep hold of the mind, and a perpetuity which resists the authority of the plainest scriptures and the force of the strongest arguments. It becomes, by these means, a pillar of the Establishment; a bar against all alterations and improvements. It hence

* The Liturgy of the Church of England reduced to the Standard of Scripture. Miller, 1763. Preface, p. 11, 12.

hence becomes a matter of wisdom and policy to defend the doctrine, in order to vindicate the Liturgy, and to guard it from change. For a change here might endanger the whole fabrick. But in proportion as the doctrine of the *Trinity* derives support and a sanction from being blended with all the offices of the Liturgy, it is incumbent on you to desist from the use of devotional forms, into which so gross, so hurtful a deviation from the simplicity of the gospel is incorporated.

Such we see in the instance before us, hath been the pernicious effects of this doctrine, that it hath perverted men from the plan of worship laid down in the New Testament, and hath introduced a plurality of objects into our religious worship. It hath mingled with our conception of the divine Being, terms that are unintelligible, ideas contradictory to one another, and notions that are subversive of the unity of God, the leading doctrine of the Old Testament and the New. This doctrine, when it is carried into practice, by distinct addresses to each person, not only as it were separates the divine Essence into parts, but the divine character and perfections are split and divided: some kind of peculiar and distinctive attributes are ascribed to each, and the affections and thoughts are distracted and drawn out towards different objects of different powers and characters, instead of being fixed on one glorious

glorious Being, the source of all excellence and perfection.

" I appeal to the conviction of the *Athanasians* themselves, whether in their ideas there be not something more stern and inflexible in the character of the Father than of the Son: also, notwithstanding they ascribe divine attributes to the Father, whether leaving the Son out of the question, something peculiarly amiable and engaging would not be wanting in what would remain of the divine Being; and likewise, whether leaving out the Father and the Son, the *Spirit* alone, according to their customary ideas of his nature and attributes, would be equal to the works of creation, providence, and redemption. If this be a just representation, there is nothing that the *Athanasians* really conceive of as *one* Being, to whom they ascribe all divine perfections of justice, goodness, and mercy.* What confusion attends a worship in which such different objects are addressed! The end of devotion, which is to elevate the heart, and to fix all the powers in the adoration of the supreme Being, is in a great measure defeated and the genuine spirit of it debased.

Very unhappily thro' the ill tendency and effect of such a faith and such a worship the accomplishment of the important words of prophecy

* Priestley's Letters, containing the Dissenting Interest.

prophecy is obstructed and impeded. I refer to that distinguishing description of the times of the *Messiah* exhibited in the prophetic language of *Zechariah* ch. xvi. 9.

" *In that day shall there be ONE Lord* (or according to the Hebrew, the *Lord shall be one*) and his NAME ONE. For though the words originally refer to the Polytheism of the *Pagans*, and the various names under which they worshipped God, yet they must remain unfulfilled as long as our prayers are directed to more than one Being; and it is the language of our creeds and of our devotions, that his *name* is not *one*, but *three*, the *Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit*.

This mode of worship is not only repugnant to the accomplishment of this prophecy, but with the faith on which it is grounded; and it actually prevents the fulfilment of it by its influence on the minds of those whom we wish to see converted to the Christian faith. A clergyman (who had been a chaplain abroad in a ship) writing to Mr. *Whiston*, says, " I was sorry that the *Turks, Jews, &c.* were so very much offended with the *Christian* religion, upon these two accounts: viz. the one, the worshipping of images; the other, the belief and worship of the Trinity; which seemed to them to be the belief of three Gods. As to the first I thought we of the church of *England* were happy, in having purged away that foul error of Popery; and so I could vindicate

dicate the religion of us *Christians*, with a much greater strength than a priest of the church of *Rome*. But as to the Trinity, I confess I have sometimes wished that God had not so revealed that mystery to us, unless he had pleased to discover it farther, in regard it was a stumbling-block to *Heathens*.*

This representation is confirmed by the excellent Mr. Emlyn, who tells us, that in *Le Compte's History of China* one may read how the *Heathens* derided the *Christian* doctrine of a mortal God: and upon that account thought Christianity as *fabulous* as their own religion. And Dr. *Causabon*, in his book of *Credulity and Incredulity*, says, p. 118, that *this doctrine has kept more people from embracing the Christian faith, than any other thing he knew of.* †

It prevents the *Mahometans* from even examining the principles and evidences of Christianity. *Mahomet* says, in the fifth chapter of the *Koran*, “ It is long since the Infidels have said there are three Gods; certainly there is but one.” To the same purpose, ch. 21, “ We have not sent thee, O *Mahomed*, but as a mercy to all creatures. Say, no other has been revealed un-

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* Whiston's Letter to the Earl of Nottingham.
p. 71, 72.

† Emlyn's Humble Enquiry, near the end.

to thee, than that your God is one God. But if they turn their backs on the confession of God's Unity, say I proclaim war against you all equally.

The Jews are equally averse from the doctrine and worship of the Trinity. Two leading articles of their *Sepharim Ikkrim*, or *Book of Fundamentals*, appear to be formed in direct opposition thereto, viz. "I believe with a perfect faith, that the Creator (whose name be blessed) is one, and that such a Unity as is in him can be found in none other; and that he alone hath been our God, is, and for ever shall be. I believe with a perfect heart, that the Creator, (whose name be blessed) is to be worshipped, and none else."*

Such are the impressions which this worship of a triple Godhead leaves on the minds of those who have the clearest and justest sentiments concerning the Unity of God. This ought at least to awaken your serious and careful enquiry, whether this worship, and the sentiments from whence it is derived, are to be found in the word of God: and if you be convinced they are not to be found there, it ought to render you very cautious how you support a corruption of the gospel,

* *Triumph of Truth, or Trial of Mr. Elwal*, p. 9, 10, 1st edition.

† *Dr. Launcelot Addison's State of the Jews*, p. 17, 19.

pel, which is so prejudicial to its progress, and forms with numbers an insuperable ob-jection against it, lest you bring upon yourselves the woe denounced against them, by whom offences (i. e. stumbling-blocks in the way of the gospel) come.

That singular pattern of benevolence, Mr. *Firmin*, was so affected with the importance of guarding Christianity from such misconstructions of its doctrine concerning the divine Unity, and of holding up this fundamental principle in the plainest and most explicit manner, that “ He proposed to hold assemblies of divine worship, distinct from the assemblies of any other denomination of *Christians*, who should undertake a more es-pcial care of that article; for the sake of which it is certain both the Testaments were written. He meant that these assemblies should be called Fraternities in the church.” This worthy man feared, that without such assemblies the continual use of terms which in their ordinary signification are confessed by all to imply three Gods, would paganize at some time the whole Christian church.*

His judicious Biographer pertinently re-marks on this scheme of Mr. Firmin, “ That many persons perhaps will be of opinion, that it was by no means a sufficient pro-test against the use of phrases which were

G 2 *not* thought

* See a valuable and well written piece, entitled, *The Life of Thomas Firmin*, by Mr. J. Cornish, lately published for Mr. Johnson, St. Paul’s Church-Yard.

thought to have so direct a tendency to lead men into the belief of a doctrine which subverted the important article, the Unity of God. A total separation from all churches where such forms are used, seems to be the duty of every *Unitarian*; especially if he live in a place where an *Unitarian* society is, or may be set on foot. This is the only way of making a full, uniform, and consistent protest against so glaring a deviation from the word of God.

To join in such worship, whether habitually or frequently, is to uphold this corruption of the gospel, and to take a part in the very act that is contrary to the rule of scripture. It is surprising that this conduct is not considered as *sinful*. It is a transgression of the law and rule of worship laid down in the scriptures to worship *more Gods than one*. It is a transgression of the commands under the authority of which the gospel is committed to mankind: not to add unto this divine scheme, and to keep it without spot. But the transgression of God's law, whatever be the subject of it, is *sin*. Nay, where there is not a full conviction of the lawfulness and rectitude of any measure, it is *sin*. "Whatever is not of faith, or doth not proceed from conviction, saith the apostle, is *sin*." And it is not easy to conceive how any one can be fully persuaded, that it is *doing right* to act with and strengthen the hands of those who are in his opinion at the

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very time and on the very business in which he joins them deviating from the pure gospel. How much more difficult is it to attain to such a persuasion, where the corruption affects the *very fundamentals* of Christianity, and of all true religion, even the *object* of worship and the strict unity of God?

By what plea can you, Christian Brethren, justify your conduct to your own minds, and evade the charge of guilt it draws on you? Will it exculpate the countenance you afford to such worship, by continuing in communion with the church that retains it, to urge the sublime spirit of devotion, and the excellent things that mark some of its offices? Such a plea would equally excuse a concurrence in the worship of the church of *Rome*, from the Liturgy of which these excellent things have been borrowed. Besides, no mixture of truth can alter the nature of the errors blended with it; nor any ardour and elevation of spirit in some parts preserve us innocent in the use of those services, the general strain and leading sentiments of which are *sinful*.

If fashion induce, or gain tempt you, to persevere in the communion of a corrupt church, how, upon these principles, do your claims to the character of Christ's disciples agree with the descriptive marks of such laid down by Him, or his inspired Messengers? "Ye are not of the world, as I am not of the world. If any man will come after me

" Let him deny himself, and take up his
 " cross and follow me. He that loveth fa-
 " ther or mother more than me, is not
 " worthy of me ; and he that loveth son and
 " daughter more than Me, is not worthy of
 " Me. Be not conformed to this world.
 " The friendship of this world is enmity
 " with God. Do I seek to please men ?
 " If I yet pleased men, I should not be
 " the servant of Christ." Upon reading
 these criterions of a genuine and accept-
 able faith in *Christ*, enter seriously, into
 your own hearts, and examine the mo-
 tives of your conduct. He who requireth
 of us such a sacrifice of ease, reputation,
 and interest in a steady attachment to his
 gospel, hath gone before us in the path of
 self-denial, and hath set us an example of
 fortitude and greatness of mind in bearing
 witness to the truth. He exacts no other
 service of us in his cause, than what He
 himself hath already rendered to mankind.
 And if you would consistently maintain your
 discipleship to him, you must share the risks
 and trials of it, as well as be candidates for
 its reward.

The same course of conduct which fide-
 lity to him and his gospel dictate, is enforced
 on us by a regard to mankind ; if we wish
 that their hearts may lie open to the full
 power of the truth as it is in *Jesus*, and that
 they may be enlightened with the knowledge
 of the true religion ; " One sure step towards
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the reformation of the world is to begin the reformation in *ourselves*, and as far as respects our own conduct: and who can tell what the influence of his own example only may do? Were temporising compliances to be carried through every concern, or always to be adhered to, error and falsehood could never cease; no reformation could ever take place.

Your concurrence in the *Trinitarian* worship of the church of *England*, or of any other church, gives countenance and support to that system by which numbers are kept in ignorance of the true character and government of *God*, are led to worship the Almighty under a false character—and are warped aside from the simplicity of the gospel by the dint of authority and the fear of penetrating into awful mysteries. Your separation and protest would serve to awaken the attention of others, to excite a serious and impartial enquiry, and to shake that slavish reverence for public forms and the established religion which screens absurdity and mysticism from a free examination. It would facilitate the spread of the scriptural worship and a rational service of *God* in the room of an obscure jargon. It is no wonder, if many, offended with the harsh sounds and the irreconcileable principles of the established Liturgy, forsake the assemblies of public worship, and are prejudiced against Christianity. Will it not be a service to such, to set

them an example of distinguishing between the gospel and the corruptions of it ! Will it not afford them a fair opportunity to judge of its truth, if you exhibit it in its plain and native dress ? Let them see what Christianity is *in itself*. Your continued conformity misleads them, and contributes to keep out of sight the real and genuine gospel. Every error retained obstructs a further reformation, and obscures the light and glory of the gospel. Do justice then to Christianity.

Your separation from a corrupt church will not only render a general, important service to the gospel; it will particularly encourage some of its ministers to follow the dictates of truth and conscience. Many of the clergy are convinced, that the public offices of the church are very distant from the genuine gospel of *Jesus Christ*. They are very much dissatisfied with them and uneasy in the use of them. Though they are not fully persuaded of the rectitude of remaining in the church : yet they tell us, " that they see many reasons, purely of the conscientious kind, that seem to preponderate on that side." When they think of withdrawing from their livings and their charge, a painful scene presents itself, and shakes their resolutions : they start back from the prospect of silence and of want ; at the thought of excluding themselves from their sphere of usefulness, truth, and the souls of men, and of their sources of support being

cut off. Let a generous sympathy for them move, Christians, your breasts : enter with them on the paths of integrity and duty. By your own separation provide them with friends who shall be ready to receive them, to strengthen their hands, make up by their generosity the loss they must sustain, and to afford them new opportunities of ministerial service, which they may fill up with consistency, usefulness, and comfort ; a comfort unembittered with scruples, and a usefulness unimpaired by restraints on conscience on one side, or by reflections on their sincerity on the other. Declare yourselves, in your respective situations, ready to put yourselves under the pastoral care of such faithful but now distressed ministers of *Jesus Christ*. Shew by your own conduct, that they will not want patriots and friends ; but you are ready to be to them “ what *Firmin* was to the excellent *Biddle*.” What satisfaction will this yield you ? and how will you rejoice in the hope of sharing the rewards, as you have soothed the trials of the righteous man !

As I would engage you to assist the upright, and to make the path of the scrupulous plain and easy, (it is a generous service!) so be dissuading from lending the aid of your example, or the encouragement of your friendship, to prevarication. Your continuance in the church gives countenance and support to that system by which the clergy
are

are ensnared. To use the reasoning of an excellent piece on that subject, " Many of them, you know, not only subscribe what they do not believe, but utter every day what they must consider as nothing less than impious falsehood, in form of a solemn address to Almighty God. And can it be easy to you to be accessory to other mens sins, and thus to be in some measure the cause *why some perish for whom Christ died?*

" Had every serious enlightened Christian the courage to withdraw from the communion of a church in which he sees such sinful prevarication encouraged, the attention of the most supine statesmen would be excited to it; and notwithstanding the opposition that is always to be expected from the heads of corrupt establishments, and all who are gainers by them, a reformation would immediately take place.

" There cannot be a plainer rule of life than this, that every man should do what he would wish others to do, and as he is convinced would be the best if all others would do. As we have remarked before, no man can tell what influence his own example may have to produce that effect. Whatever comes of it, he, by this means, discharges his own conscience and saves his own soul.*

If any thing more need to be added on this topic of persuasion it is this; that with you

* A Letter to a Layman on the Subject of Mr. Lindley's Proposal for a Reformed English Church; printed for Wilkie, 1774.

you of the *laity* this reformation must begin, or probably it never will commence. The princes of the world are not disposed to concern themselves about a Reformation of Religion. And the spiritual governors of great national churches have long shewn that we must not expect that a reformation should originate with them.

Every argument for this conduct is strongly enforced by another consideration, to which your particular attention is requested. It is this:—That the worship of the church of *England* is *Idolatrous*. It is not only a plain deviation from the genuine gospel, but a deviation of the most criminal kind. This charge may, perhaps, appear heavy and severe, as criminating *all* who embrace and defend it, and intimating that they stand exposed to the awful judgment of the great day, as *Idolaters*. Far be it from the intention of him who addresses you to adopt the language, or to insinuate the ideas of a certain creed, which is used in the solemn acts of worship, and declares that they who do not hold it, *cannot be saved* and must, *without doubt perish everlastingly*. The *modesty* and *candour* of this anathema would not become a *private person*: though it may take shelter under a *national law and establishment*. “ I am sensible how indispensably requisite an evil intention is to constitute a crime; and I have no doubt, that where the most *blasphemous idolatry* is once adopted and made familiar by habit, it may be practised by good men with

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the sincerest piety and the best intentions in the world." * The same allowances, the same hopes which charity and even justice to their characters teach us to indulge with respect to the sincere and holy members of the church of *Rome*, ought much more to be admitted on behalf of the meinbers of the church of *England* or any Trinitarian church on earth. Yet in neither case can the piety and good intentions of the worshippers be supposed to alter the nature of things or counteract the influence of a false religion on the generality of the people.

It is to be earnestly wished, Christians, that your minds were impressed with a just sense of the *nature* of the worship which we are considering. Allow me to repeat it, that it is *idolatrous*.

The precise nature of idolatry is easily ascertained by referring to the *first* and *second* commandments of the decalogue. The former is opposed to *polytheism*; the latter to the worship of the one true God, under any bodily or material form. The former is thus expressed: "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." The second is thus fully described: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." Exod. xx. 3, 4, 5. And whereas in the New Testament the apostles bid us beware of *idolatry*; my dearly beloved

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* Evanson's Letter to Bishop Hurd, p. 132.

*flee from idolatry ; little children keep yourselves from idols ; and the like ; and they being Jews, must necessarily by idolatry mean the worshipping the true God by images, or giving any divine worship whatsoever, any honour due to God, giving that I say, to any other being, how excellent soever, although they that do so do believe and worship the supreme God, the maker of heaven and earth, all the while : for by idolatry they could understand nothing but what went for idolatry under the law, seeing the notion of it was not in the least altered, but it continued just the same that it was before :** let *Trinitarian* worship be examined by these commandments, which run through both Testaments, and to support which has been a leading design of revealed religion, under every dispensation, through every age.

The first commandment excludes every other being and every creature from being prayed unto and adored, except that powerful and glorious Being who was the God of the *Jews*, who brought them out of the land of *Egypt*, and who made the heavens and the earth. This Being is always spoken of, as was observed in the preliminary texts, as *one Person* : Thus in this very law, “ Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” Our Lord uses the same style, when referring to this command, “ Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and *Him* only shalt

* Claget's Sermons, vol. I. p. 141, 2.

shalt thou serve." In the Old Testament this Being is characterised "as the God of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*: under the New, as "the *Father*, our Father in heaven, and the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*." Consequently, to pray unto *Jesus Christ* is to pray unto another Being besides "the Father and his Father; in direct opposition to the command that says, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before Me." To lead you to enter into this argument, and think and feel as would the immediate followers of *Jesus Christ*, let me beg you, my *Christian* brethren, to consider yourselves in the place of those to whom *Christ* preached, and in that of his constant disciples.

Suppose that you had always been taught to consider the first commandment as forbidding *you to have any other God besides that Being* who gave you such commandment; and that you had ever been habituated to regard this Being as *one Lord*. Suppose you had always heard *Jesus Christ*, your Master, speaking of this Being as *his Father*, and *the Father*, and appropriating these terms in that Being whom you had ever called and regarded as the *God of Abraham*; and speaking of himself as coming from *Him*, acting under *Him*, and seeking *his glory*. Suppose you had been one of those who had applied to him to be taught "*how to pray*;" and his answer had been to you, "*After this manner pray ye; Our Father which art in heaven; hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom*

doin come ; *thy* will be done, &c. When thou prayest to *thy Father*, &c." Suppose that you had heard him say once and again, " Whatsoever ye shall ask *the Father* in my name, He will give it to you : In that day ye shall ask *Me* nothing." Suppose that you never heard this true and faithful Instructor give any directions or commands to pray unto himself. Suppose that you had seen that *He himself* always prayed unto *the Father*, and that in the most solemn act of devotion you had heard him addressing *the Father* in this language, " This is life eternal, to know *thee*, the *only true God*, and " Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Imagine yourself in these circumstances, can you conceive, that it ever would have occurred to your thoughts that you should pray unto *Christ* himself? It is not natural to apprehend that you would have understood Him as holding forth the *one same Being* to be the object of *your* prayers whom you had ever worshipped under the sanction of the first commandment? Would it have entered into your thoughts, that *the Father* meant the *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*? If you have then been taught to direct your prayers and supplications to other Beings besides the Father, is not this a corruption of your Master's religion? And a violation of that command, in effect, again promulgated by him, " Thou shalt have no other God before me ?" If it be so, it is idolatry.

Let

Let the *Trinitarian* worship be examined by the *second* commandment, it will not better stand the test. This forbids the worshiping of the one true *God* under any bodily form whatever: A species of idolatry made highly criminal by the *Mosaic*, and not more consonant to the nature, genius, and spirit of the *Christian* revelation. Yet " of this kind of idolatry also, offensive as it is declared to be to Heaven, the whole orthodox church is unquestionably guilty, for she avowedly worships the one true *God* as incarnate in the body of a *Man*. For when the *Protestants* invoke the one Almighty *LORD* of heaven and earth by his *nativity* and *circumcision*, his *agony* and *bloody sweat*, his *cross* and *passion*, his *death* and *burial*, they represent to us the *bodily form* of their deity, as plain as if they placed a crucifix before our eyes. And accordingly they are not the churches and books of devotion of *Roman Catholics* only, in which images and pictures are to be found of the *Human-Deity*, or the *God-Man*, as the Orthodox affect to call him, whom both *Papists* and *Protestants* adore as the only true *God*.

Nay, a late advocate for the doctrine of the Trinity, *Dr. Burgh*, whose book has been honoured with the recommendation of a learned and eminent prelate, and followed with a diploma from the university of *Oxford* as a reward for the author's zeal and labours: this writer has plainly told us, that *God* took man-

Ep. Hurd.

manhood on him in order to give a sensible object of worship to mankind, incapable of forming any adequate idea of the abstract God, whose qualities are of a nature incomprehensible by our minds. The world, merged in idolatry, (continues this orthodox writer) at the time of his incarnation, was more fully indulged with an object of sense, to which men could look according to habit also, as well as the natural incapacity to conceive a God only spiritual, and to whom, even by the exertion of the same faculties by which they had adopted and adored idols, they could prefer the worship, without the imputation of idolatry.*

You will judge, whether, notwithstanding this writer's attempt to evade the consequences of the doctrine he avows, (in which avowal he has been favoured with the sanction of such illustrious patrons) and of the worship he defends, he has gained his point. You perceive what are his premises, and in perceiving this you discern the ground of our objection to *Trinitarian* worship, viz. that it is directed to a sensible object, to an object which the mind conceives as existing in a *bodily form*. While this is granted can it with truth or propriety be said, that this worship is preferred without the imputation of idolatry? What can it be said that a

¹⁰ To accomplish a like *Hylomorphic* wor-

* *Evenson's Letter to the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry*, p. 119, 120, 121.

worship repugnant to the second commandment is not a violation of it? That to worship a *sensible object*, God under the form of a *Man*, is not to bow down to the likeness of any thing in heaven or in earth? This is not more rational and consistent than it would be to assert that white is not white, nor black black. These assertions would be *harmless nonsense*: not so the contradiction I am exposing. " For it represents the eternal, immutable Deity, who is always the same, who never alters the decree he hath once pronounced, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning; " as having undergone the greatest change of which any spiritual Being is capable, on purpose to justify and establish, at one period, the very same mode of worship which he had most solemnly prohibited at another; and that, with a caprice and fickleness of mind unbecoming the weakest of his frail creatures, after having, for so many generations, so severely punished the forefathers of the *Jewish* people, under the old covenant, for worshipping him under *a bodily form*, he, under the new, inflicts his vengeance upon their posterity, for refusing to transgress his own commandment, and to worship him under *the form of a man.*"*

It further deserves, my brethren, your serious consideration, whether this species of idolat-

† The same, page 122.

idolatry; on which we are now animadverting; is not more abhorrent from every just principle of reason, than any that has been practised in *pagan* nations? "The worship of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, amongst people ignorant of astronomy, seems an easy consequence from a natural admiration of those splendid orbs, joined to an experience of their great utility and influence over the earth. The worship also of deceased heroes, and the distinguished benefactors of mankind, was produced, no doubt, by an excessive love of their persons, and veneration for their memories, accompanied with a strong persuasion of their existence after death. And thus almost every instance of *Pagan* idolatry may be accounted for from the immoderate prevalence of some of those passions, which are inherent in human nature. But whether the worshipping of three different Agents, as three distinct objects of adoration, and yet constituting but one God; whether the worshipping a Divinity, who is himself his own *Father* and his own *Son*, his own *Sender*, and his own *Messenger*; whether the worshipping the *immutable* and *eternal* Godhead, as having *changed* the mode of his existence, and compounded himself with the frail and mortal nature of man, on purpose that He might *die*; whether this be not a species of *Idolatry* unknown in antient times, and unaccountably monstrous and irrational,

rational, and repugnant to every *natural* faculty of an unprejudiced mind, I leave to you seriously and candidly to consider." †

Weigh these reflections, and consider what is your duty with respect to a Church whose worship is truly and strictly speaking *idolatrous*. Hath God commanded us to have no God but one? Hath he prohibited the worship of himself under the likeness of any thing that is in heaven or in earth? And can you hesitate about abandoning all connections with a Church that is seen to worship more Gods than one; and to worship the Almighty under the form of a *Man*?

We are told of the great BOERHAAVE, that he worshipped God in that light only in which he had been pleased to discover himself, lest otherwise, by adoring an imaginary deity, he should prove an *Idolater*. An example well worthy of your imitation. It is not easy to say, how any one who reverences the authority of the *one* God and *Father* of all, speaking to us in his word, can justify it to his own mind to conform to *idolatrous* worship: or even to lie under the suspicion of conforming to it?

It is, as Bishop Hurd shews in his elegant discourses on Prophecy, " a discriminating and prophetic character of *Antichrist*, that He is an *idolatrous* power; another *Babylon*,

† The same, p. 124, 25.

Ion, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth ; that is, as polluted himself with the grossest idolatry, and as corrupting the nations with the same profane worship." He applies this mark to the church of *Rome*, and upon its possessing this and the other discriminating characters of *Antichrist*, his lordship draws this conclusion : if these prophecies are rightly applied to papal *Rome*, and have in part been signally accomplished in the history of that church, it is beyond all doubt, that our communion with it is dangerous ; nay, that our separation from it is a matter of strict duty. *Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins* ; and that ye receive not of her plagues, are plain and decisive words.*

But are they decisive only with respect to *that particular species* of idolatry practised in the church of *Rome*? Do they not speak with equal plainness and authority with respect to *every church* in which any species of idolatry is practised ? for in *every such church*, the two first commandments of the decalogue, which lie at the foundation of all true religion, are violated ; and this distinctive mark and badge of *Antichrist* is discernable. By parity of reason, nay, upon the same grounds on which his lordship argues,

* Hurd's Sermons on Prophecy, p. 368. 416.

communion with such a church is dangerous, and separation from it a matter of strict duty.

Can you deem the idolatry harmless, because the divine Saviour is the object of it? Or can you justify yourselves under the plea of paying honour to Him, when, in this very instance your conduct runs counter to his *declarations* and *example*? By both he has taught us to receive and honour himself, only to the glory of God the FATHER. Will He, who disclaimed the character of goodness, replying to a person who accosted him with the title of *good Master*, *Why calleſt thou Me good?* There is none good but One, that is God? Will He, who said, “*I ſeek not mine own will, but the will of Him who ſent me?*” Will He, who declared, “*I honour my Father, and I ſeek not my own glory?*” Will He, who hath given us an understanding, that we may know the true God, and by whom we are in Him that is true? Will He who hath taught us not to ask himself, but to *ask the Father in his name?* Will He who directed all his words and actions to his Father’s glory? Will He be displeased with the humble and serious attempt to advance the same? Rather, is not the aim and design of these persuasions with which you are addressed, perfectly consonant to his own discourses and temper? All due and grateful respect be paid to the Son of God, to the captain of our Salvation: but I dare not give

give that honour and glory to the *Son* which I verily think, and am fully persuaded, ought to be given to the *Father only*.

It may, perhaps, be pleaded as an apology for this idolatry, which we condemn in *Protestant* churches, that it not only arises from exalted thoughts of *Christ*, but is at most only founded on speculative errors, and is by no means to be stigmatised as of a bad moral tendency. To this it may be replied, that though the *idolatry* which subsists in *Protestant* churches, is innocent, in comparison with the idolatry of the *oriental* nations, of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, of the *Gauls* and *Britons*, and with those kinds of idolatry of which we read in the sacred scriptures.—“ Yet it is not therefore innocent, or not hurtful. Indeed it is hardly possible that any false notion concerning God can be so, and especially a notion so very false as this is: viz. that divine worship should be paid to *Jesus Christ*, as a Being the *same in substance*, and equal in power and glory *with his Father*. “ When it is apprehended that instead of *one*, there are *three* Beings, to whom the perfections of deity are referred, the imaginations of men will always make a partition of divine attributes among them; and in no one of them will there be that union of venerable and amiable attributes, which we ascribe to the *one only and true God*; and as the mind of man cannot contemplate more than one

object at the same time, it cannot, with these notions, be possessed of that mixture of reverence and love of which the sentiments of true devotion consist.

" From these principles it will follow, that while the *Father, Son, and holy Ghost* are equally regarded as God, one of them will be thought to possess one set of attributes, and another a different set; one of them will be imagined to be of one disposition, and another of another; just as the Heathens conceived of their several deities.

" When the Son is considered as the object of our petitions,* and the source of all blessings, the Father will be neglected. He may be feared, but cannot be loved. To a mind accustomed to think in this manner, the motives to virtue that are derived from the imitation of God, often lose the whole of their effect. This consideration is even sometimes unfavourable to real goodness; for certainly it would not be to the advantage of any man's character to resemble God the *Father*, according to the ideas that some persons have of him; ideas which they could never have entertained of him, if by dividing the Godhead, they had not divested him of some of his essential attributes."†

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* As in the Liturgy of the Church of England.

† Priestley's Letters on the Dissenting Interest,

p. 22, 25.

It is submitted to you whether these reflections do not point out your duty with clearness, and say to you with authority, "Dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." Will you persevere in a violation of the right of the only true GOD? Will you continue to repeat acts of devotion which rob him of the glory that he will not give to another? Can you justify it to your own minds to transfer, even to the Redeemer, that great and glorious character, the homage due only to his GOD and FATHER, "who hath put all things under him." If there be sin, if there be danger in idolatry, of any kind, (and that there is the very term implies) can you satisfy yourselves in a conduct which supports idolatry, and exposes you to the danger, and involves you in the guilt of it? Is this the line of conduct to be pursued by a sincere disciple of Christ? Judge ye.

Every argument before advanced is enforced by one further consideration, applicable to each, and nearly connected with your character and expectations, as Christians. It is this, that the great author of our religion will come again, and call his disciples to an account. The apostle instructs us to connect the contemplation of this great event with such a subject as this. For when he exhorts Timothy to maintain the simplicity and purity of the gospel, he refers to this object of the Christian's faith and hope: "I give thee charge—that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebutable,

until

until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." He directs the views of the *Philippians* to the same time, as the season in which their *Christian* integrity would be a matter of the greatest importance, praying, "that they might approve those things that are excellent; that they might be sincere and without offence 'till the day of Christ. In the prospect of this period his reflections on the fidelity and attention with which he himself had kept the sacred deposit of the gospel, gave him peculiar pleasure, and were brightened with the sublimest hope. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge, shall give me at *that day*.

Without presuming then to anticipate the sentence of our great Judge, or to form ideas of it as partial and prejudiced minds may dictate, it is not improper to carry forward your thoughts to this day of his second appearance. Our Lord himself summons our attention to it with the same design, Rev. xvi. 15. "Behold, I come as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments." i. e. who maintains the purity and integrity of his *Christian* profession, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." ch. xxii. 12.

On the ground of this expectation let your conduct be tried, if you continue to worship GOD on a plan repugnant to the direc-

directions given us by the founder of our faith. It is not merely an error of *judgment* upon which you are requested to reflect, under the serious prospect of your Lord's appearance, but on an error of *conduct*, which involves in it a breach of godly sincerity, and of fidelity to *Christ* and his gospel. Be persuaded to examine this in the light of the great day.

It is referred to your calm and serious reflection, whether in the expectation of your Lord's coming, you can approve of and justify your conformity to a plan of devotion which you are sensible is founded upon mere human authority and prescription, and is contradictory to the precepts of your only Lord and Master? Will it be a ground of confidence and hope before Him at that season, that you have, in this respect, so materially deviated from his command, "Call no man Master?" It is submitted to your consideration, whether in the expectation of *his* coming, who was the true and faithful Witness, you can approve and justify an apparent concurrence in a worship you inwardly condemn, upon the pretext that you only join in such parts of the service as you judge just and scriptural! In the days of his ministry, an artless character, free from disguise and dissimulation, met with his particular approbation; and his notice of it hath perpetuated the name of the person to whom it belonged with a lasting and honourable

able eulogy. “ Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him, and said of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.” John i. 47. All duplicity and ambiguity of conduct, you will reflect, is to fall under the scrutiny of this Judge of our sincerity, who “ searcheth the heart and reins.” Let it be suggested to your serious thoughts whether in the prospect of that day, when the author of our religion shall visit with indignation those who have worshipped the beast, or received his mark, you can approve of and justify any support you have afforded to the corruptions of the gospel, by your continued communion with a church where the corruptions are blended with all its services? In the view of that day can you derive any comfort from your faithful endeavours to serve the Christian cause, when you have given all the countenance in your power to the worship, which is an offence to many, and a bar to the conversion of the Jews, Mahometans, and Heathens; which obstructs the advance of the day “ when the LORD shall be one, and his name one”? Your great master hath promised to give at his coming, a crown of life to those who have been faithful unto the death; but is it no damp to the sublime and lively hopes you would wish to entertain, that these instances of behaviour do not entirely comport with that fidelity to which this reward is announced? Far be it from him who addresses you, decisively to explain, or uncandidly to limit, the promise of that Master,

Master, who is our compassionate high-priest as well as righteous judge: — but he wishes, earnestly wishes *you*, Christians, to judge in this matter for yourselves, and to consider what course of conduct will lay a foundation for confidence at the coming of *Christ*; and what conduct will expose you to shame at that day, when the chief and sole desire of every believer is to stand well in the opinion of his Lord and Judge.

In points of this nature it is the more necessary to take that day into consideration, to counteract the influence of other considerations which now have often too great an influence over the mind; the considerations drawn from human example, fashion, authority, and interest.

“ The great stumbling-block in the way of Christianity is the same now that it was from the beginning; being what was called by the apostle *Paul* the *offence of the cross*, and which he seems to intimate, is never to cease. The pride of men was shocked at the mean appearance of their divine instructor, and especially at the ignominious circumstances attending his death: and men are still as much as ever captivated with external splendor, and what the world will think reputable, even in religion. They are still apt to be disgusted at every thing that is reckoned *mean*, and consequently are ashamed to be seen to connect themselves with a cause that has not the countenance of the *great*, the *wise*, and the *many*. In short,

hort, they are deficient in true greatness and enlargedness of mind; they are in the scripture sense of the words *fools* and *blind*, not being able to overlook temporary losses, temporary sufferings, and temporary disgrace by connecting them steadily in their minds with future glory, recompence, and bliss."*

It is *your* professed faith, as Christians, that assuredly as the great author of our religion, the ambassador of truth and grace, has already appeared in our world, He will be again revealed from heaven to raise his sincere disciples to glory and immortality. How will all the great and splendid things of life disappear before the brightness of his coming! Is there need of more than one moment's calm reflection to convince you, that then the only thing of consequence will be his approbation? And can we really entertain the serious and rational hope of it, merely because we have professed his religion, but have joined with the *many* to countenance, and with the *great* to support the corruptions of it? Will it be then a valid plea, that fashion and interest urged us to depart from his laws, to act inconsistently with our own convictions, and to obey men rather than the Son of God? Conceive how your minds would be affected were the awful appearance of the judge an event which you had sure grounds to look for within a few days? Were the heavens to open and you to see *him* coming in the clouds, in whom

you

* A Letter to a Layman, as before, p. 22, 23.

you believe as the guide to eternal life ; Him who declared that the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth ; " Him, who was himself the true and faithful Witness ; " and died leaving us an example to follow his steps : Him, who hath warned us, that whosoever loveth father or mother more than him, is not worthy of him ; he that findeth his life shall lose it ; " Him who laid it down as a certain principle that true believers in him were not of the world ! It is left to your own minds to imagine, how a conduct formed from a deference to the example and authority of men, or from the views of profit and greatness, will appear to *such a judge* :—and to *your own hearts*, when summoned to his tribunal to receive according to your works. You believe the Christian religion to be true : believing it to be true, can you doubt the propriety of my laying these considerations before you, or resist the force of them ? You cannot but believe that the great founder of your faith will verify all his declarations, and then what will be the state of those who have regarded the world, and what it can offer, more than his word and promises ? Can you look forward to their situation without fear, without solicitude to escape the shame and disgrace of it ? These expectations are sufficient to expose the weakness and folly of being captivated by the pomps and emoluments, enslaved by the authority, or ensnared by the fashion of

of any religious establishment whatever. These are things which will all vanish away, as airy phantoms. But truth, fidelity to *Christ*, and integrity of character, are things of lasting excellence and worth, of essential importance on that day, which will try all things : everlasting honours await them ; they will draw after them in the final issue stability, glory, and life for evermore.

It is but a short time, before we shall find the truth of these things, they should therefore affect our minds, and influence our conduct, as if they were to be immediately revealed. " It is but a short time that we have any of us to abide here ; and therefore we should lose no opportunity of bearing our testimony to the truth of God."

It is not easy, methinks, to evade the force of these remonstrances and persuasions : and yet some may feel a great difficulty how to act in this case. To those of you, who live near to any society of Dissenters, where the purity of Christian worship is preserved, and the one God and FATHER of all is adored and praised through *Jesus Christ*, the path to be pursued is plain and obvious, if you regard the convictions of your own minds, and the truth of GOD. If your situation be not so favourable to your sentiments and wishes, yet by communicating your sentiments to others, you may perhaps find a sufficient number to join you in forming a new society, which, like the respectable one that meets at *Essex Chapel* in the *Strand*,

shall

shall have for the particular object of its association, the *worship of the one living and true God the Father*. A number of persons, united upon this principle, are *like a City set upon a Hill*: their conduct instructs men: it serves to disseminate far and wide the principles of true Christian worship, and to diffuse a spirit of serious and rational zeal. They are at once distinguishing examples of sincerity and integrity in religion, and of attachment to the authority and simplicity of the gospel. But if your situation be still less favourable to the prosecution of a conduct, which is consonant to your convictions and to a sense of duty, permit me to ask, whether it be *essential* to the utility and acceptableness of social worship, that *numbers* should be assembled together in a house devoted to public worship, and with all the attendants of a minister regularly educated, and other officers? In the first ages of Christianity, we read of *churches* that did not extend beyond the circle of a family, nor even always to that; As the church in *Cæsar's* house, and that in the house of *Philemon*, &c. It cannot admit a doubt, whether it be not preferable to worship the only true God with one's *family only*, agreeable to the scriptures, and in the language of sincerity and truth, than to join the largest society with every circumstance of state, convenience, and splendor, in a worship the scriptures forbid and our hearts disapprove. The judicious and pious head of an house, by devoting the same portion of time to regular worship in his own dwelling,

with

with the aid of good sermons and pre-composed prayers (of which the English language affords a variety and abundance) will procure weight to and reflect dignity on his own character—evince his own sincerity—edify his own house—and hold forth an instructive pattern to others.

In any of these situations you may follow the dictates of truth and conscience. And whatever be your circumstances, dread joining with an enlightened and informed mind, in *unscriptural, insincere, and idolatrous worship*, remembering the words of Christ: that “the Father seeketh such to worship him, as worship him in spirit and in truth: and “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Dread also that awful voice from heaven, respecting all antichristian corruptions of the gospel in mystical Babylon: “Come out of her, my “ people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, “ and that you receive not of her plagues.”

I am, with every good wish for your improvement in the knowledge of the truth, your edification in holiness, and your communion in the christian consolation and hopes,

My Christian Brethren,

Your affectionate Servant and Friend,

In our common Lord, and honoured

Master and Saviour.

Jan 4, 1781.

F I N I S.